The year was 1914. A tent was set up just north of Medora in a grove. Brother John Bennet, Brother Harley Hackler, and Brother L.R. Ooton were used to help usher in what was called an “Apostolic” revival. For indeed a powerful revival came to the small farming community nestled in the Hoosier Hills. The stories of miracles, signs, and wonders brought great interest and magnified God. By all accounts this is one of the first Apostolic churches in the state of Indiana.

L.R. Ooton, a pioneering Pentecostal preacher authored two books that give his account of the early days of our assembly. The books are “God’s Time Piece” which has a copyright date of 1967 and “The Except Without Exception” which has a copyright of 1974.

L.R. Ooton was born June 18, 1896 in Frankton, Indiana, the son of Wallace and Hattie Antrum Ooton. He was married in June of 1922, to Edith Neal. Two children were born to this union, Thomas and Polly Ooton.

At the age of fifteen, his mother, realizing that the hand of God was upon him, dedicated her front parlor to him to be used for his devotions and Bible study. So great was his fervor in the things of God that he prayed earnestly night and day for a considerable length of time. Of this period of time he wrote, "My studies began with an open Bible in my mother's front room where I spent many hours a week, most of which were upon my knees. I simply opened the Bible and let God speak to me, and I closed it and talked to Him. Upon a number of occasions the Lord spoke verbally to me, and afterward I found it in the Bible. I most certainly have heard His voice many times, and once I looked upon the Master in person (hanging) on Calvary."

Consecration such as this, inevitably led to a life of service, and sometime later Brother Ooton left the comforts of home for the work of the ministry. "It was quite a battle of faith," he wrote, "For a boy of seventeen to leave father, mother, the grocery store and home to launch forth by faith, singing and preaching the gospel to all the world."

Biographical information provided by [http://www.apostolicarchives.com/whoswho_o.html](http://www.apostolicarchives.com/whoswho_o.html)
The following accounts are taken from pages 33 to 37 of “God’s Time Piece,” and pages 22 to 25 of “The Except Without Exception.” Brother L.R. Ooton mentions that as a result of his preaching a church was established.

For almost 60 years of my life, I have “lived by faith” rather than to work for a salary; and my Lord and Master has never disappointed me one single time through all those years. I have never been able to out-give my Lord; and in all my giving, I have learned that, the only things we have in Eternity are the things we give away in time. Our Lord has advised, “Give, and it shall be given unto you.” St. Luke 6:38. Early in my teens, I was called into the ministry. My mother gave me the front room of our home, as a place in which to pray and study for the ministry.

Both the time and the place were sacred, and I took full advantage of it, seeking God night and day.

Soon it was time for me “to launch out into the deep”; and I began my ministry on foot, walking from community to community.

A short time later, I launched out a bit farther, by bicycle; thus; adding other miles to my ministry. Sooner than I had expected however, it was time for me to launch out body and soul into the work of evangelism many miles from home. Through the spirit of prophecy, it was predicted that “my ministry would indeed be far reaching”; and so it has been. My ministry has taken me more than one and one half million of miles to date; and I have never been able to answer all of the calls that have come in from near and far.

Possibly, my greatest test was that first trip away from home and loved ones; for it meant that I was now leaving Father and Mother, who owned and operated a grocery store and meat market in Elwood, Indiana; and I must now leave this and trust Jesus for everything. I was truly, launching out into the deep, and letting my nets down. My very first experience away from home possibly may be of interest to you.

(Not too long after) the great flood of 1913 in the state of Indiana, while engaged in prayer I was called by the Holy Spirit to evangelize in the county of Jackson in a small town by the name of Medora. Upon arrival, I discovered that three Apostolic (those who had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but not the revelation of Jesus Name Baptism) ministers had been engaged in a seven weeks revival campaign without any apparent results. When they heard that I had received a message in the Spirit to come there and minister they were more than pleased to turn the tent and its contents over to me and leave for either a brief or prolonged vacation elsewhere. As the leader of the evangelistic group left me at the Baltimore and Ohio railway station, bidding me good-bye he left a fifty cent piece in my hand with which to carry on. A room over the top of a garage was to
be my home to be. My revival funds were soon depleted and I was obliged to trust the Lord to supply my daily needs and I was obliged, like Peter, to go fishing.

By this time I had made one convert and he became a very close friend. He was an employee of the village blacksmith. I borrowed a fishing line and hook from him, as he was very poor, and had a good sized family of his own to support. I asked for nothing more. I walked two and one half miles to a branch of White River and soon caught a beautiful two and one half pound white fish. The wife of my friend cooked it for me. The following day, I repeated my journey, and came home with a three and one half pound white fish; which was cooked for me by my friend’s wife and it was served on a table made from an old piano box in the middle of their kitchen. The third day, I again repeated my journey, returning home with a two and one half pound white fish. During the years that followed, I have never been served such appetizing meals as those three meals in that humble home. The Lord was truly testing my faith as an Apostolic minister.

After a sufficient period of faith testing, the Lord gave us a revival resulting in the establishment of an Apostolic Church there, where already there were seven other churches of the Protestant faith established. But this was to be an Apostolic revival long to be remembered by our Lord’s humble servant.

As an evangelist of the Apostolic faith I was unwelcome to both the leadership as well as the membership of the seven other churches and was so informed by them. But beloved, these are the days and times in which the Lord’s people must have the right and opportunity of returning to the “faith once delivered to the saints.” Therefore there is naught for us to do but to obey God rather than man. In a short while every member but three in the Pilgrim Holiness Church were filled with the Holy Spirit as in Acts 2:4, including the district elder, Rev. Oral Weddell. As this humble and obedient servant of the Lord worked in a corn field on his farm a heavenly being appeared to him in a vision speaking to him in other languages. This convinced him of his need of a Spirit filled life. Among those filled with the Holy Spirit, were business men; school teachers; ministers; together with some who had never professed to know Christ before; and some high officials from various religious groups. As a result of this great revival, an Apostolic Church was established there and it still remains there to this day (written in 1974).

Outstanding among those baptized by the Holy Spirit was a very precious minister by the name of David K. Turner who lived some fourteen miles away to the west of Medora. He at one time in life had been an infidel, and for some years past had been ministering as a United Brethren in Union preacher. His conversion to Christianity was the direct result of being smitten with a sun stroke one hot July day as he was traveling along by horse and wagon to town. When regaining consciousness, as he lay on his back in the wagon bed, he called upon the Lord to heal him. “If so,” he promised God, “I will minister your Word to others.” He was instantly delivered and healed. Up to this point in life he was faithful in walking in all the light he knew. As yet, I had neither met nor been made acquainted with him.
While ministering one night the Holy Spirit attracted my attention to a distinguished looking gentleman with white hair, sitting next to the platform on my right. I stopped preaching, walked down from the platform, and as I shook hands with him I inquired, “Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?” With a kindly smile he looked up at me and replied, “I do not believe that I have. Will you pray for me that I might?” I promised him that the following day I would fast and pray for him to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and immediately returned to the platform and continued my message. Other precious souls responded to the call that night and gave their hearts to Christ.

Early the following morning I walked a considerable distance to an old abandoned cemetery on a hilltop quite overgrown with grass and weeds. There I fasted and prayed for Brother Turner all day. Coming down from the hilltop, I returned to the place of worship. Just as I was entering the tent, I met Brother Turner. His countenance had been changed, and there was a quickness about his step, although he now was some seventy-two years of age. I inquired, “Brother Turner, how did you get along today?” He turned to me quickly and replied, “Brother Ooton, I cut more corn and shocked it today than I have ever cut in one day before in my life. I felt like I was flying from one corn stalk to another.” I whispered softly and quietly to the Lord these words, “Thank you, Jesus, you are answering prayer.”

That night a young man who had never attended church before came to the altar of repentance. Brother D.K. Turner knew him, and was kneeling before him in earnest prayer, asking the Lord to save him, when suddenly the Lord Jesus spoke to Brother Turner: “Pray for yourself.” Brother Turner stopped praying for a few minutes while he tried to comprehend why the Lord would speak like that to him. He first reasoned that, “Such is not the Lord, for I am already saved and it is this boy who needs prayer.” Again the Lord spoke in no uncertain language to Brother Turner. He ceased praying, and looking up, he saw a heavenly being speaking to him in other languages. Immediately he placed his hand over his eyes, and rubbing them with his fingers, he looked again go see if he could actually believe his eyes. After doing this for the second time, he instantly sprang to his feet shouting and was baptized with the Holy Spirit as on the day of Pentecost with the signs following. For quite some time he could not speak to us in English; and when he did about midnight, he asked me to go home with him. I was the driver in charge that night.

I mention Brother Turner’s experience in detail for the following reason. Some weeks later he came to me with a request to baptize some thirty-five or six people in his community who had been brought to the knowledge of the truth through the preaching of this humble servant of Christ since being filled with the Holy Spirit as in Acts 2:4. I assured him
that since I was only the evangelist and he would be their pastor, it would be best for him to do the baptizing. Although I was then a young man, he looked at me with kindly eyes, saying, “But, Brother Ooton, you have been a father in bringing me to the Apostolic faith; and how I wish that you might do the baptizing.” I urged him, however, to comply with my sincere request, and he obeyed.

In the midst of the baptismal service a marvelous event took place. As I was helping the people in and out of the water I heard a voice from heaven saying, “My brother, I baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ.” While I yet marveled at what I had heard, for I had never heard of such a thing before, Brother Turner came to me on the bank of the stream, inquiring, “Brother Ooton, what was that I heard today? The Lord spoke to you. What did He say?” When I told him what I had heard, he doubted that the Lord had said it. “But, Brother Ooton, there is only one way in which to be baptized, and that is in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Broken in spirit, he continued, “You have been instrumental in leading me into the light of the Apostolic faith, now please don’t be misled by some strange spirit.” I assured him that I had never heard or read about baptism in Jesus name before. “So come now, let us return to the house and search the Scriptures and see for ourselves.”

Turning to the Scriptures, we immediately found where the Apostles baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 19:5) Thrilled and inspired by this heavenly visitation, we rejoiced greatly and read the Scriptures all night long.

MORE CHURCH HISTORY

According to the testimony passed through the generations some of those earlier “brush harbor” prayer meeting included: Orel and Annie Weddle, John Weddle, Flora Weddle, James and Rhoda “Ma” Hubbard, Effie Eastin, William and Mary Mize, and Margaret Russell to name a few. The early revival also includes ministers like Bro. John Bennett and Bro. Roberts. It is believed that between 33-38 were baptized in Jesus Name in the White River at that first tent revival.

Around 1920, Bro Bennett held another tent revival on the “old school grounds.” Once again a major revival spread into the community. Many would bring their own tents and camp for the night. It was reported that as many as 500 would gather for one evening service. A documented testimony from Orvel Gray declares that an hour before sundown people would start for the tent meeting in wagons, on horseback, and walking.

In 1922, George Arthur “Oss” Shepard and wife Pheobe were baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost. The congregation now had enough members now to
construct a new church building on the property they had purchased in 1915. The new building was a one room tile covered structure with the total cost $1,390.00.

The ministers who pastored in this one room building were John Bennett (1914-1923), Harry Sweet (1923-1927), Jim Davis (1927-1930), Ray Faulkner (1930-1931), Stanley Clark (1931-1935), Ralph Underwood (1935-1942), and Bruce Jordan (1942-1952).

A new addition was added onto the building in 1952 when Roy McCarty was pastor (1952-1958). George Bennett (1958-1964) made more improvements on the structure. A fellowship hall was built during the time Roger “Mickey” Shields (1968-1975) was pastor.

The church experienced great growth both numerically and physically during the 30 year leadership of Bishop M.L. Walls (1975-2005). During this time the church building was enlarged and remolded.

In June of 2005 Timothy Gill became the pastor and continues to this date.

We believe the future of the Medora Pentecostal Church is bright beyond measure because of our valued heritage. We continue to cherish our heritage and boldly embrace our future.